

# TRUST MATTERS

Department of the Interior • Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians Volume 13/Issue 1 **Winter 2013**



## **AIRR Visited by TV Station**

Now in its eighth season, *Native Report*, an informative magazine-style series that celebrates Native American culture and heritage, has produced an episode that includes coverage of the **American Indian Records Repository (AIRR)** in Lenexa, Kansas. *Native Report* is a production of WDSE and WRPT, PBS stations in Minnesota.

Co-host and co-producer Tadd Johnson and the crew toured AIRR's facilities. Coverage includes footage of this special underground location and interviews with Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST) personnel who manage AIRR. If you missed it on TV, *Native Report* episodes are posted online at [www.wdse.org/shows/native/watch](http://www.wdse.org/shows/native/watch). Look for Season 8 Episode 2 to view the coverage of AIRR.

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## **Don't Pay a Fee — It's Free**

It's free to check online to determine if you have an Individual Indian Money (IIM) account that doesn't have a current mailing address on file with the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST). OST needs current addresses of IIM account holders in order to mail periodic statements of account and other account information to them.

Don't pay for information you can access yourself for free. There are commercial sites that charge a fee to "search...Whereabouts Unknown database and to obtain recovery and claims information..." The Whereabouts Unknown (WAU) database lists names of IIM account holders whose accounts do not have current addresses. The WAU list is on the OST website and you can go there and look for your name, for free.

Go to **[www.doi.gov/ost](http://www.doi.gov/ost)**. At the bottom of the page, select the link that says "Is OST Holding Money for You?" That link will take you to the WAU database. Look for your name in the list.

Money in IIM accounts rightfully belongs to account holders. So remember, if you see names of people you know on the WAU list, please let them know they need to update their contact information.

To update IIM account information, do one of the following:

- Call OST's Trust Beneficiary Call Center (TBCC), toll free, at 1-888-678-6836
- Contact one of the OST field offices, listed on the OST website at [www.doi.gov/ost/fto](http://www.doi.gov/ost/fto)
- Complete the account set up, disbursement of funds, and change of address form on the OST website at [www.doi.gov/ost/individual\\_beneficiaries/forms.cfm](http://www.doi.gov/ost/individual_beneficiaries/forms.cfm)

If you choose to print the form, be sure to sign it and get it witnessed before mailing it to:

Office of the Special Trustee (OST)  
Attn: Trust Beneficiary Call Center  
4400 Masthead St., NE  
Albuquerque, NM 87109

Help with your account and other Indian trust fund information is free too. Call TBCC or contact an OST field office, listed online at [www.doi.gov/ost/fto](http://www.doi.gov/ost/fto). It's **free!**

## From Germany, Via Facebook

All the way from Germany, had a cheery holiday season because of an Account Maintenance Technician with the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST). The technician's innovative approach to locating IIM account holders who do not have current address information on file led to the happy result.

Accounts without current addresses are referred to as Whereabouts Unknown, or WAUs. Every OST field office conducts efforts to locate owners of WAU accounts.

The technician had a list of account holders with high balances in their WAU accounts. One name had been on the list since the account holder's father had passed

away. The technician set a goal of locating this account holder before Christmas 2012.

### Whereabouts Unknown or WAUs are IIM accounts without current addresses on file with OST

The technician, who had has been using routine efforts to locate this person, such as mailing out letters and doing research, decided to try outreach via Facebook. A search on the account holder's name quickly

found the Facebook page of a likely person. The page listed several friends from the tribe of the IIM account holder.

The technician contacted one of the friends. This local man said he was the cousin of the account holder, who lived in Germany. He offered to pass the technician's phone number along and have his cousin call.

Two weeks later, the account holder and the technician spoke. After verifying that this was actually the owner of the WAU account, the technician told the account holder there was more than \$30,000 in this WAU account. With updated contact information, the \$30,000 was paid soon after, along with a \$1,000 payment as an eligible member of the Historical Accounting class of the *Cobell* Settlement.

The technician realized great personal satisfaction! And what about the IIM account holder? Well, it was an exceptional holiday for that family, thanks to the relentless effort expended by one person to help another.

To find a list of all WAU account holder's names, go to the OST website at [www.doi.gov/ost](http://www.doi.gov/ost). Access the "Is OST Holding Money for You?" link at the bottom of the homepage to check the WAU database for names of people you know.

For more help, contact a local OST field office. The offices are listed on the OST website at [www.doi.gov/ost/fto](http://www.doi.gov/ost/fto). Help is also available from the Trust Beneficiary Call Center (TBCC), toll free, at 1-888-678-6836. TBCC is open Monday through Friday 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday 8 a.m. to noon, Mountain time.

### OST Partners to Provide Financial Skills Training

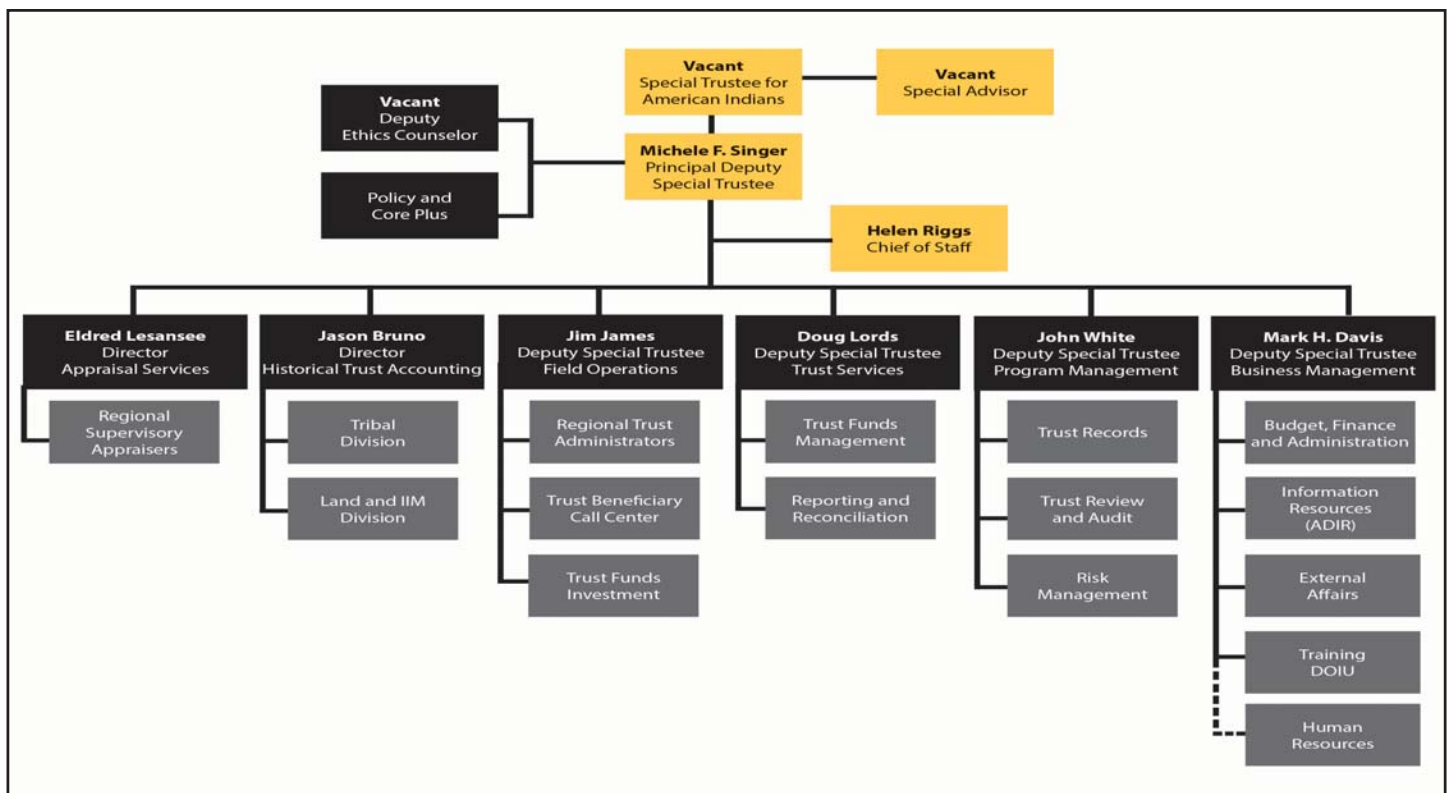
Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians Fiduciary Trust Officer Brian Ross (Osage & Eastern Region) was a panel member at the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation's Alliance for Economic Inclusion (AEI) launch conference in Tulsa, Okla., October 2012. AEI's mission is to bring all unbanked and underserved populations into the financial mainstream.

FTO Ross spoke about financial education for beneficiaries in Osage County, accomplished through OST's partnership with Osage Financial Resources, Inc., and the Oklahoma Native Assets Coalition. After the presentation, representatives from the Department of Housing and Urban Development expressed an interest in partnering with OST to help promote financial empowerment in several Native communities in Oklahoma.

**Did you know? The American Indian  
Records Repository opened its doors  
May 2004.**



## OST Realigns Management Responsibilities



The Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST) has undergone an internal realignment of management responsibilities. This marks another step forward in OST's goal to deliver efficient and high quality services to tribes and Individual Indian Money account holders. The changes, effective the first quarter of fiscal year 2013, were, in part, based on recommendations in last year's *Examination, Evaluation, and Recommendation Analysis of the Department of the Interior's Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians Study* (Efficiency Study), conducted by Booz Allen Hamilton, Inc.

Michele F. Singer, confirmed by the Department of the Interior's Executive Resources Board as the permanent Principal Deputy Special Trustee (PDST), now oversees the following offices. The list includes two new offices: Program Management and Business Management.

- Chief of Staff Helen Riggs
- Office of Appraisal Services, managed by Eldred Lesansee
- Office of Historical Trust Accounting, managed by Jason Bruno
- Deputy Special Trustee for Field Operations, managed by Jim James

- Deputy Special Trustee for Trust Services, managed by Doug Lords
- Deputy Special Trustee for Program Management, managed by John White
- Deputy Special Trustee for Business Management, managed by Mark Davis

### Regional Trust Administrator (RTA)/Region

The Fiduciary Trust Officers and the field offices are aligned under five RTAs. The RTAs, with their specified regional assignments, are listed below.

Rob Craff/Southern Plains, Eastern Oklahoma, and Eastern

Margaret Williams/Navajo and Southwest

Melvin Burch/Great Plains and Alaska

Thomas Reynolds/Rocky Mountain, Midwest, and Pacific

Catherine Rugen/Northwest and Western

OST's updated organization chart can be viewed on the OST website at [www.doi.gov/ost/about\\_us/upload/1-22-13websiteorgchart-2.pdf](http://www.doi.gov/ost/about_us/upload/1-22-13websiteorgchart-2.pdf). The regional map can be accessed on the OST website at [www.doi.gov/ost/fto](http://www.doi.gov/ost/fto).



## Speaking of the OST Website...

The Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST) website was migrated in October 2012 to the Department of the Interior website. The website address is **www.doi.gov/ost**.

While the official website address has not changed, an *alternate* address circulated years ago: **www.ost.doi.gov**. If users access **www.ost.doi.gov**, they will be automatically redirected to **www.doi.gov/ost**.

However, the Department was not able to create forwarding links to the OST homepage from *all* pages of the old website. Users who bookmarked pages using **www.ost.doi.gov/[anything]** will encounter broken links. Users who encounter broken

links need to create new bookmarks to their favorite OST website pages.

If users encounter broken links, they can:

- 1) Go to **www.doi.gov/ost** and create new bookmarks.
- 2) Search "Office of the Special Trustee" or some variation, in their favorite search engine and click on the link returned, which will be **www.doi.gov/ost**, and bookmark their favorite pages.

OST has created the following shortcut web addresses that allow users to enter simplified text to access pages.

**www.doi.gov/ost/audit**  
**www.doi.gov/ost/wau**  
**www.doi.gov/ost/fto**

Bottom line: OST's website address is **www.doi.gov/ost**.

## Trust Land Consolidation and the Buy-Back Program

Officials and staff from the Department of the Interior, including the Office of the Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST), recently held consultations with tribes regarding the Land Buy-Back Program for Tribal Nations (Buy-Back Program). The land buy-back effort is part of the *Cobell* Settlement, finalized on November 24, 2012. The settlement established a \$1.9 billion fund for the voluntary buy back and consolidation of fractionated land interests.

Regional consultations took place January 31 in Minneapolis, Minn.; February 6 in Rapid City, S.D.; and February 14 in Seattle, Wash. The Department is seeking input from tribes and individuals in order to proceed with the Buy-Back Program as quickly as possible. Land purchases through the program must be completed within ten years.

At this time, OST's involvement is three-pronged:

- Determining fair market value for fractionated tracts through the Office of Appraisal Services
- Developing the capability of the Trust Beneficiary Call Center (TBCC) to answer questions about the Buy-Back Program as well as document individuals' willingness to participate in the program
- Serving as local points of contact to provide information to tribes and willing sellers about the program through Fiduciary Trust Officers and field staff

For details and updates about the Buy-Back Program, please see the Initial Implementation Plan and other information available at **www.doi.gov/buybackprogram**. Questions should be directed to Anthony Walters at 202-513-0897 or **Anthony.Walters@bia.gov**, or to the TBCC, toll free, at 1-888-678-6836. The TBCC hours are Monday through Friday 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday 8 a.m. to noon, Mountain time.

## Electronic Notifications Increase

Individual Indian Money beneficiaries who use direct deposit or a debit card have been offered options to receive deposit notifications electronically, instead of by regular mail. The two new options are email or text message e-notifications. In the first quarter of fiscal year 2013 (October-December 2012), electronic notifications increased. During that same period, notifications sent by regular mail declined over 80 percent.

	Email	Text Message	Total
Oct. 2012	2,494	2,880	5,374
Nov. 2012	3,482	3,413	6,895
Dec. 2012	3,500	3,961	7,461
<b>Qrt1 totals</b>	<b>9,476</b>	<b>10,254</b>	<b>19,730</b>

E-notifications benefit beneficiaries by being timely, safe, and convenient. They also result in printing and postage administrative cost savings. It's a win-win.